

## Happiness is Fleeting by Demjesith

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**Summary:**

Happiness is a funny thing. It's fleeting. It's contained in moments and memories. It's snapshots of time. It isn't something you hold tight in your fist and own forever. No. It's in a smile. Or a kiss. Or a fun night with friends.... Tonight, Will can feel it.

## Happiness is Fleeting

Happiness is a funny thing. It's fleeting. It's contained in moments and memories. It's snapshots of time. It isn't something you hold tight in your fist and own forever. No. It's in a smile. Or a kiss. Or a fun night with friends. Sometimes it smacks you across the face and suddenly you hear music more clearly and you see colors more brightly. And sometimes it's so subtle that you don't even know it's there until it's gone and all you can do is you look back on it with a bittersweet longing.

Tonight, Will can feel it. It's buzzing through his body and the music is crisp and his friends' laughter is crisper. Lucas' laugh borders on a cackle, Max's is littered with snorts, and Mike's is sunshine personified.

Dustin doesn't laugh, but that's likely because the joke is at his expense. Who could blame them, though? His hair is outrageous.

Will giggles and shakes his head in amusement. It fades, however, as he watches Dustin witness Lucas and Max going off to dance with one another. He knows that feeling. That blunt knife twisting into your heart as your stomach bottoms out. The prickly feeling of jealousy stabbing your chest while acid burns your tongue.

His smile is gone now and he wants to say something to help Dustin, but what is there to say? He doesn't even know how to deal with his own garbage pile of emotions; how is he suppose to deal with someone else's?

Mike is to his right. He can feel him there, radiating that energy he always gives off. Care, stability, kindness. It comes off him in tendrils that have a way of wrapping themselves around you and yanking you in. Drawing you to him like he is the only thing that matters. Maybe he is.

The sound roars in his ears then slowly tunnels until he is yanked from his thoughts. Mike's cinnamon scent still lingers in Will's nose as the boy widens his eyes at the girl in front of him. Had she just asked him to dance? He blinks and glances at Mike then back again,

the panic rising like bile in his throat. Words. What were words?

He stammers something, eyes darting again as he scrambles to keep it together. Then Mike encourages it. He actually nudges him forward, and although Will knows Mike would never force him to do something against his will, the boy finds himself going with her. His small hand clasps around hers and it feels wrong. It feels foreign and new in the worst way. It isn't warm and slightly calloused like the only other hand he'd ever held. And the owner of said hand is too far away now, Will can't even smell the Fall crispness of his best friend anymore. He couldn't catch that hint of green apple shampoo. Instead, the scent of cheap perfume assaults his senses and he forces a smile as he puts his hands on her waist.

They rock and he feels empty. It feels like someone has unscrewed his scalp and scooped everything good out of it. There is nothing wrong with her. She seems like a perfectly nice girl - her lack of tact with nicknames aside - and she's pretty in the way that girls his age were. But that wasn't it, was it? It didn't matter how charming she is, or how beautiful he supposed she is. She isn't him. And that makes all the difference in the world.

Mind wandering, the walls melt away and the music drowns down, reaching his ears like he is listening to it underwater. Then the figure in front of him distorts and turns into the one he desires. The one he cries out for. The one he needs.

Mike.

Mike with his unruly hair and his long nose. Mike with his kind eyes and his lips that curve just right. Mike with the splattering of freckles. Mike with the long, lanky limbs. Mike.

Will's heart expands and swells, singing a chorus of longing. A smile stretches over his face and hears himself say, "This is perfect." But the voice is far, far away. And the voice that replies back isn't the sweet, melodic goodness of Mike Wheeler, but that of the girl. The girl that means nothing to him. The girl that he is wasting the time of.

The younger Byer boy quickly lets go of her, his smile faltering. The

look she gives him causes guilt to prick along his chest. But leading her on would be much worse, wouldn't it? He backs away one more step and inhales through his nose.

"I-I'm sorry," he stammers and shakes his head. "I'm so sorry."

And then he scampers away. Because it's all wrong. There is a chapter missing. The end of the letter has been torn away. The film isn't fully developed.

No.

This wasn't what he wanted. And he was finally going to get it. He was finally going to do what he needed to do. Confess. Take what was rightfully his. Being small and being kind had caused people to step on him and take him for granted. But not anymore. He is in love with Mike Wheeler.

*He is in love with Mike Wheeler.*

And he was going to get him.

The slight boy spins on his heel and makes a beeline for his best friend, confidence bursting through him like never before, courage coursing through his veins in lieu of blood. He is absolutely on top of the world and nothing could stop him.

Except....El.

Because there she is. And she is so beautiful. She is perfection in a blue dress, soft curls framing her face just right, casting her features into a sweetness that can't be rivaled.

His heart clenches and a fire sparks below it, sending the organ into flames so intense it causes it to turn to ash. Stopping short - mind, body, and soul - Will stares with wide eyes. The energy between them is palpable. He feels like if he reaches for them he would feel it, like a physical force field, keeping the two of them in a bubble of utter joy. They're other halves. They're puzzle pieces cut out for the sole purpose of fitting together.

All fight drains from him, and Will waits long enough to witness their

lips touch, and he can see it. He can see the way the sun bursts onto Mike's face, bliss coming off of him in radiating pulses. When he leaves, he doesn't cry. He doesn't weep. He doesn't curse. He just goes. And when his Mom asks how it was, he gives her a small smile and says, "it was great."

Happiness is a funny thing. It's fleeting. But if Will could trap happiness in a bottle, he would give it to Mike. Each and every time.